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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 11th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 7 September 1990, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mrs. PALME (Sweden)

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Any corrections to the records of the meetings of this session will be consolidated in a single corrigendum, to be issued shortly after the end of the session.

The meeting was called to order at 3.50 p.m.

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

1. Mr. WARD (Chairman of the Committee on Administration and Finance) drew the Executive Board's attention to the Committee's report contained in document E/ICEF/1990/AB/L.17.

ADOPTION OF DECISIONS

2. The CHAIRMAN said that, if she heard no objection, she would take it that the Executive Board wished to adopt the recommendations of the Committee on Administration and Finance, as contained in its report.

3. It was so decided.

4. Ms. EHRENREICH (Denmark) referred to the following draft proposal which her delegation had submitted at the previous meeting:

> "The Executive Board
>
> "Recalling its decision 1990/7 on family planning,
>
> "Noting decision 90/35 of the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme which, inter alia, requested the United Nations Population Fund to take the necessary steps to initiate the preparation, based on specific country studies, of a joint report on collaborative programme activities with the United Nations Children's Fund and - as far as possible - other organizations, notably the World Health Organization and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and to submit the report to the thirty-ninth session of the Governing Council,
>
> "Requests the Executive Director to collaborate with the United Nations Population Fund in the preparation of this report and to submit it to the Executive Board at its regular session in 1992."

5. She had since consulted with one delegation, in particular, which had expressed concern about the draft proposal and a compromise had been reached. Accordingly, the draft proposal should be amended by adding the following phrase at the end of the second preambular paragraph:

> "which stresses, inter alia, the necessity of full co-operation in the field of family planning with other relevant United Nations programmes, each within its own mandate, notably those of the United Nations Population Fund and the World Health Organization."

The addition was taken almost verbatim from the fifth preambular paragraph of decision 1990/7 of the Executive Board.

6. The CHAIRMAN said that, if she heard no objection, she would take it that the Executive Board wished to adopt the draft proposal as amended.

7. It was so decided.

OTHER BUSINESS

8. Mr. TEELEY (United States of America) said that the previous day the United States Government had issued national health objectives to the year 2000, including 70 objectives for children and youth. Copies of those objectives would be made available to all interested delegations.

9. Mr. MOHAMMED (Observer for Iraq) expressed the hope that the draft World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children and the draft Plan of Action would translate into a better life for all children in all countries under all conditions. In the spirit of those documents and based on its own national humanitarian ideals, Iraq had made considerable efforts in order to provide free maternity and medical care, including child immunization, to its people, free day care centres for working mothers and many other services.

10. He wished to draw particular attention to paragraphs 22-25 of the draft Plan of Action concerning children in especially difficult circumstances and the protection of children during armed conflicts. In that context, the situation of millions of innocent Iraqi children could not be ignored. Those children were being subjected to starvation, in violation of humanitarian principles, as a result of an economic embargo imposed on Iraq by the United States of America and its allies. Failure to address that terrifying situation would jeopardize the credibility of international efforts for children.

11. The siege was being conducted in violation of the Charter of the United Nations and Security Council resolution 661 (1990), which exempted food and medical supplies from the embargo. In late August 1990, both the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities and the International Committee of the Red Cross had urged that the supply of food and medicine to Iraq should not be halted. UNICEF and other organizations must seek to protect the children of Iraq from dying of starvation and sickness as a result of the inhuman siege.

12. Mr. AL-SABEEH (Observer for Kuwait) said that the representative of Iraq had engaged in beautiful rhetoric in referring to his country's humanitarian civilization. He pointed out that the practices of the Iraqi occupying forces in Kuwait were far from humanitarian. Those practices ranged from stealing food, medical supplies and relief tents from the Kuwaiti Red Cross and shipping them to Baghdad to looting foodstuffs and medical supplies from Government and private warehouses, also for shipment to Baghdad. The Iraqi troops had stolen sophisticated medical and testing equipment from hospitals and appropriated assets, valued at more than 20,000,000 Kuwaiti dinars, belonging to the Kuwaiti pharmaceutical company. Iraqi troops had ejected patients from their hospital beds in order to make room for Iraqi soldiers and had caused the death of many other

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(Mr. Al-Sabeeh, Observer, Kuwait)

patients by seizing sophisticated medical equipment in intensive care units. They had taken incubators and nursery equipment from Kuwaiti hospitals, discarding the newborns and children in garbage bags. The Iraqi troops had taken plasma from the Kuwaiti blood banks and shipped it to Baghdad and had released all the inmates from the psychiatric wards, leaving them defenceless in the streets. If the representative of Iraq could plead for the protection of Iraqi children, his country should show the same concern for the children and people of Kuwait.

13. Mr. GRANT (Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund) stressed that the special session of the Executive Board was devoted to the preparations for the World Summit for Children and was not a forum for other issues. The introduction of political considerations in Executive Board discussions was also a departure from normal UNICEF practice.

14. Mr. TEELEY (United States of America) agreed with the Executive Director and said that he regretted being in a position which forced him to reply to the Iraqi delegation. The condition of the children of Iraq was a direct consequence of the actions of its leader. The actions taken by the United States of America had been taken with the support of the United Nations and many, many other countries. The entire world was justified in condemning Saddam Hussein for the invasion of Kuwait. If the Iraqi delegation was concerned about the future of its children, it had only to withdraw its troops from Kuwait and allow the Kuwaiti people to govern themselves.

15. Mr. MOHAMMED (Observer for Iraq) said that the children of Iraq had been endangered by the unjust siege to which the country had been subjected. Security Council resolution 661 (1990) specifically excluded the interruption of supplies of foodstuffs. Iraqi children should be treated in accordance with the Declaration of the Rights of the Child and the draft World Declaration and Plan of Action.

16. Mr. MARTIN (United Kingdom) endorsed the comments made by the representative of the United States of America.

17. Mr. AL-SABEEH (Observer for Kuwait) said that he supported the views expressed by the United States and United Kingdom representatives. All Iraq had to do to regain its former prosperity was to end its invasion of Kuwait.

18. The CHAIRMAN said that she trusted that the plight of the children affected by the conflict in the Middle East would encourage all to work harder at the World Summit.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

19. Mr. GRANT (Executive Director) said that the Executive Board was about to witness the largest gathering of world leaders in modern history, an accomplishment which exceeded members' hopes and dreams. It was the vision of the Executive Board which had provided the essential motivation for the World Summit. Non-governmental organizations, which were often better placed to alert society to evolving needs,

(Mr. Grant)

had seized the opportunity to articulate children's issues. That enthusiasm had spread to the United Nations system, which had helped to shape the goals for children and development in the 1990s and had provided technical assistance.

20. The announcements of new contributions were welcome. Some States had contributed even though they did not intend to send representatives to the Summit, whereas only half of those planning to attend had contributed as yet. It seemed reasonable that those States which did intend to participate should see the logic of making commensurate contributions. Pledges of contributions to be paid in future budgetary periods would also help.

21. The real test of the World Summit for Children was yet to come, when stated priorities were translated into practical achievements. The draft Declaration and Plan of Action provided a framework for action for more than a decade ahead. Attainment of the Summit's objectives would require a steady conviction that the cause was good and that nothing was impossible.

22. The CHAIRMAN paid tribute to those who had done the preparatory work. The Summit would make a significant contribution to a changing morality, which must place children far higher in world priorities.

The meeting rose at 4.40 p.m.